

Dancescape South Africa (DSA) May 2023 Report

Dancescape South Africa (DSA) continues to facilitate daily dance classes in May of 2023 (3.00pm – 6.00pm Venue Zolani Hope Centre – Mantlane Road Zolani Ashton) engaging children in beginner and senior dance sessions. We currently employ the services of a resident teacher, a general assistant, and a director. Thanks to the support of all those who have donated to our project we are able to preserve the Fiona Sargeant legacy. Our top priority is to facilitate classes in a safe environment for both teacher and learners.

The Dancescape South Africa Directors Report:

The month of May continued as usual with Nqaba Mafilika, our resident teacher, teaching daily classes to between 40 to 80 students.

Below: Nqaba teaches the juniors.
Top Right: Class in McGregor
Bottom Right: The girls trying out their point shoes



On Friday the 28th of April Nqaba went into the studio to teach a morning session after being requested by the students to do so. It was a holiday weekend with Freedom Day on Thursday and workers day on Monday the 1st of May and he wasn't required to teach but did so for the students. On Saturday the 29th of April I received a message from Fanie, the buildings manager and director of the Zolani Care Centre, saying that the building had been flooded again and that the DSA students were to blame as he claimed that a tap had been left on in one of the changing rooms which overflowed. According to him the plug had been closed and the water

could not flow out. He added that no other people had been in the building after Nqaba. Furthermore, he said that he had to employ 2 people to work on both the Saturday and the Sunday to mop up all the water. For DSA this was a disaster as it was no doubt going to affect our floor, now for a second time as there had been flooding before. I questioned Nqaba about this and he was adamant that he had checked the taps before leaving and they were closed. Early the next week Fanie, Nqaba and I met to discuss the situation. Fanie was determined to blame DSA for the situation and Nqaba remained resolute that he had in fact checked the taps and they were closed. It was another situation of who to believe. I offered that DSA would at least pay the workers who had done the cleaning up. Later in the month I received information that there was only one worker who did the cleaning up and that it wasn't as bad as Fanie had made out. We are seriously questioning Fanie's version of the story and I have asked him for an explanation. We are also increasingly frustrated by Fanie who seems to be trying to make us as unhappy as possible in what may be an attempt to force DSA out of the premises. This issue was also discussed at length at the DSA AGM which was held only a few days after. This all happened at the end of the month and was too late to put into the April report.



Endinako Dyan before and after his eye operation

A highlight of this month was DSA's involvement with helping one of our students get an eye operation in Cape Town. Endinako Dyan, a twelve-year-old male student, suffered from a very bad squint in both eyes. I have reported on this in previous reports and this month after funds were raised by Kristine Elliott and the Gugulethu Ballet Project he was able to have the

procedure done by Dr. Galloway, a well-respected surgeon in Cape Town. He is a private doctor and the operation cost in the region of R35000. On the 18th of May, I drove both Endinako and his mother down to have his operation. It was a day procedure and then we stayed over at an Air B&B in Cape Town. This was a very good decision as he wasn't feeling at all well after and needed a quiet place to rest rather than being forced to sit in a car for three hours. The doctor was pleased with how things had progressed, and he has a follow up appointment in June. Many thanks to Kristine Elliott and all who supported this worthy cause for making this possible. We hope that his recovery is quick and successful.

On the 3rd of May, our board of trustees met for our annual general meeting. The chairperson endorsed the yearly report, and the treasurer signed the financials off. Much was discussed including a very exciting event planned for World Ballet Day in October. We hope to have a red-carpet event where our dancers perform and then the movie "Beyond Moving" will be screened. The movie directed and filmed by Vikram Dasgupta features the story of Siphe November who began his dancing life with the Late Fiona Sargeant and is now a principle with the National Ballet of Canada. Mareletta, our treasurer, reported that the Great Gatsby fundraising event was successful and that each of the three charities involved would receive R5000. We hope to put that money to use by buying tap shoes for our students.



Above: Vikram Dasgupta and his team filming a scene in Zolani for his movie soon to be screened in Montagu at a special red-carpet event in October.

Nqaba has been working with the students in preparation for the Montagu Youth Arts Festival which will be held in early August of this year. The festival is under new management, and we hope that it will be a great success. 37 of our students are going to be involved this year and Nqaba has put together 10 pieces of various styles.

Patricia Chimanga Sargeant, our general assistant, had to return to Zimbabwe this month to renew her passport. The option to have it renewed here in South Africa at the Zimbabwean

consulate would have taken far too long. She returned safely on the 25th of May to resume her duties with DSA.

Another highlight of this month was presenting 4 of our female students with point shoes. They will begin their training on point over the next few months. They were very excited to visit the DSA wardrobe and receive their shoes. We wish them well as they explore this new chapter in their dance lives.

On the 29th of May we were visited by two representatives of the Department of Culture and Sport (DECAS). Fareedah Hunter, who had visited our project last year, was joined this time by Nerine Jeaven. They were excited to inform me the reason of their visit. They are trying to create better ties between DECAS and those whom they fund. Networking and sharing of resources were high on their agenda and I must say that it was good to talk with them and to explain more of what DSA is about. Unfortunately, they couldn't see the project in action as they were very busy with seeing others in the area and even as far as Oudtshoorn. But none-the-less it was a good meeting.

The Resident Teachers Report (Nqaba Mafilika):

My report for the month of May 2023. The students are coming to classes in numbers with over 50 per day though it's winter and some are busy with their exams. They are working hard since we are nearly halfway through the year. I had four girls try to work with pointe shoes so that they can strengthen their legs and feet and possibly have them consider dance as a career. In McGregor there have been positive vibes, meeting motivational people, discussions on possible trips, outings for the students and lots of repertoire plans. I would like to thank Miss Allison Foat for donating some dance togs during our classes in McGregor, thanks to Mary for giving out some sanitary pads for the ladies. It is also good to see Endinako back in studio after his surgery in Cape town and thanks to Kristine Elliott for her generosity, the students with no doubt they will also do us proud at the coming festival.

Once again, we thank you for taking the time to read this report. Please visit our website at: <http://dancescapesouthafrica.org.za/> and follow us on social media.

Mitya Sargeant (CEO, and Director – Dancescape South Africa)